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State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

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Testimony

In support of H.B. 6311 An Act Prohibiting Municipalities from Adopting Breed Specific Dangerous Dog Ordinances

Planning and Development Committee
February 20, 2013

Dear Senator Cassano, Senator Fasano, Rep. Rojas, and Rep. Aman and members of the Planning and Development Committee:

I come before you today in strong support of 6311, An Act Prohibiting Municipalities from Adopting Breed Specific Dangerous Dog Ordinances. For the past twenty years I have worked with rescues, have fostered dogs, and volunteered with various shelters. In my experience BSL would be very harmful to the breeds it attempts to control, unfairly targets specific breeds, and has limited statistical data to back up its claim.

Pit Bulls are one of the breeds targeted by this legislation. However, Pit bulls are scientifically less vicious dogs than other breeds. In a recent study of 122 dog breeds by the American Temperament Testing Society (ATTS), Pit Bulls achieved a passing rate of 83.9% - better than Beagles at 78.2% and Golden Retrievers at 83.2%.

In addition, many owners of targeted breeds feel that BSL violates the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and its due process clause, as well as the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act. Furthermore, there are many alternatives to BSL such as safety education, spay and neuter assistance, breeder regulation, low cost training, and stiffer penalties for those who abuse animals.

Some examples to back up my claims:

In 2001, a Baltimore, Maryland, auditor estimated it would cost \$750,000 to enforce a breed-specific ban.

In 2008, Omaha proposed BSL that would cost over half a million dollars to enforce.

The United Kingdom's Dangerous Dog Act, which includes a ban on certain breeds of dogs, is estimated to have cost well over \$14 million to enforce between the years 1991 and 1996 (no more recent numbers are available). It has come under fire lately as dog bites (committed by non-targeted dogs) rise despite the ban.

BSL is a costly idea that does not serve a pragmatic purpose. It punishes responsible dogs and owners by unfairly targeting certain breeds, and essentially casts a death sentence for the dogs it targets.

I fully support Proposed Bill No. 6311 and I believe that together we can establish a more compassionate way to treat our state's family pets.

Brenda L. Kupchick